

THE PHILADELPHIA EVENING POST.

1871.

THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER FOR HALF A CENTURY.

1872.

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PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1872.

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No. 6.

SUNSHINE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY GLEN CAROL.

I find my way to the rose-hill's heart,
I find the sun in the morning's light,
I find the sun in the morning's light,
And dance along on the summer breeze.

To earth I come—mild comfort—
Life, light and joy are in my train—
Who may withstand my magic spell?
Or read my letters left in tears?

Right royally I hold my way—
I raise my wand, and shadows flee—
Even tempests in my presence smile,
And hail me queen o'er land and sea!

Helena Macdonald; OR, THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER IX.

Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us nothing.

Captain Malcolm Macdonald sat in the parlor of the Craig's End Hotel, as the flaming gilt sign-board announced, his heels elevated on the window-sill, his chair tipped sublimely back, a cigar in his mouth, and a newspaper in his hand. Many people were passing in and out, some of whom he greeted with a nod, others with a brief salutation, while he still went on with his reading and smoking. There seemed to be nothing very exciting in the paper, judging by Captain Macdonald's suppressed yawns; and he was about to throw it aside as worthless, when a paragraph caught his eye, that brought him to his feet as suddenly as though those members were furnished with steel springs.

The paragraph was brief, and ran thus: "If Oscar Macdonald, Esq., of Macdonald's Isle, be still alive, he is earnestly requested to call immediately at the office of H. Preston, Writer to the Signet, No. 12, Fore street, Craig's End. In case of his death, his heirs should apply."

"H. PRESTON,"

"Now, what in the name of Neptune and all his seals count, can this mean?" ejaculated the amazed Captain Macdonald, "should be happy to inform you," said a voice behind him, "only I don't happen to know what you're talking about."

Captain Macdonald turned round, and saw a fashionably-dressed young man who had just entered standing beside him. "Ah, Murray, how are you?" he said, extending his hand; "happy to see you. What in the world brought you here? The very last person I ever expected to see in this quarter of the globe!"

"Well," said Murray, leisurely seating himself, "I came down here, nominally, to transact some business for the governor; but the fact is, I heard the Summer Breeze had arrived, and I wanted to pay my respects to your lovely sister. How is pretty lady Helena?"

"Very well, and at present on a visit at the Rev. Mr. Macdonald's. But look at this advertisement in the Craig's End Chronicle. What the deuce do you make of it?"

Murray took the paper and carefully glanced over the lines.

"Faith, I don't know. Somebody's left you a legacy, perhaps."

"Pooh! what a notion! Who under the sun is there to leave a legacy to me? The Macdonalds are all as poor as Job's turkey."

"Well, there's your mother's relations—the Dundases. Old Edward Dundas, the city banker, is a millionaire, worth more than a hundred thousand pounds that I would undertake to count. He might have died and left you his money."

"And leave his own family without a shilling?" said Captain Macdonald.

"My dear fellow, he had no family, except a wife, and she has been dead for many years. You may be certain he has left you his heir."

"By Jove! if it should prove to be true, that would be a slice of good luck. But it cannot be. Dame Fortune would never bestow on a Macdonald any such friendly smile. They always were an impoverished race, and always will be, I believe."

"Don't be too confident. Strange things happen sometimes. For instance, I saw something strange a night or two ago."

"Yes? What is it?"

"Well, you see, about dark I was wandering about the shore, enjoying a cigar and the beauty of the evening, and musing whether it wouldn't be advisable to take a boat and go over to see her adorable majesty, Queen Helena. Most likely my cogitation would have ended in my going, only, unfortunately, there was no boat to be seen. I was about to turn away in despair, when I suddenly espied a boat containing two persons land at some distance below where I stood. One was a young fellow, tall, and good-looking, with a certain air of aristocratic bearing about him, that told me he was not to be interfered with. With his companion—oh, ye gods and little fishes, what a perfect little sylph she was! Such a miraculous combination of blue eyes, yellow curls, snowy complexion, pink cheeks, and red, kissable lips, it never was my good fortune to encounter before. But what struck me most forcibly was her resemblance to some one I had seen before; and after puzzling myself for a long time, I at length discovered she was the very image of pretty little Jessie of the Isle."



AN UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION.

I dare say she has greatly changed since then."

"Well, what was there so strange about a handsome fellow and a pretty girl landing on the beach to interest the nonchalant Aleck Murray?" asked Captain Macdonald.

"Listen, I haven't got to the strange part of my story yet. They walked up the beach to the road, and I could see the girl was terrified and excited, while he tried to soothe and quiet her. My curiosity was aroused; for, 'pon my soul, Macdonald, I never saw a lovelier little creature; and with a sort of idea they were up to some mischief I followed them. It was nearly dark, and they hurried on so fast they did not notice me, and I tracked them into one of the most obscure streets of the town, and saw them enter a little secluded Presbyterian Kirk."

"Well," said his auditor.

"Well, sir, the fellow left her there and went off. I crept softly in, and in the obscurity hid behind a post, determined to see the end. Dark as it was, I could see her tremble with inward emotion, and crouched down in her seat, with her face hidden in her hands, as if in terror, remorse, sorrow, or some other feeling was weighing down her heart."

"Wonder the gay Aleck Murray did not approach and offer her consolation," said the young captain, dryly.

"By Jove! I felt like doing it," said Mr. Murray, in all sincerity; "but I wanted to see what was up, for I knew now all could not be quite right. Presently, the young man came back, and with him a minister. All was clear as stars at midnight now. This was a runaway match, a clandestine marriage—something which is always interesting to fast young men like myself. The happy pair stood up before the clergyman, and the train was soon made one flesh. My ears would have run themselves into points in order to hear the bride, but I listened in vain. The minister mumbled over the ceremony so profoundly low that I could not hear a single word—not even the names of the parties, which I was particularly anxious to find out. I suppose it was all right, however, for I saw the clergyman pocket the fee, and the young man, tucking little blue-eyes under his arm, walked off; and faith, I'd have given a trifle to have stood in his place. I followed, not being ambitious to be locked up all night even in so holy a place as a church."

"Just as I went out, I heard the most awful shriek I ever want to hear again, and there the bride stood like one suddenly turned to stone, while the bridegroom was trying to console her. What scared her I don't know, but certainly I never saw a more terrified look on any face than was on hers. Not wishing to be seen, I drew back, and in a few minutes they started on. I followed them as before, and saw the girl stop for a moment in a grocery shop, while he waited outside. Then they went down to the beach; he handed her into the boat, pushed off, and they were gone—leaving me to rub my eyes and wonder whether I was sleeping or waking. Now, what do you think of the wedding on the sly, without friends, or anything in the usual line?"

"Well, really, I cannot say. Such things do not interest me so deeply as they do you. Perhaps it's the Strathmore fashion."

"No; there's something wrong. He was evidently of a rank superior to the girl. I could tell that, both by their dress and air, and general appearance. I should like to get to the bottom of this mystery."

"Then why not see the minister who married them?"

"Well, for sundry reasons. First, I didn't see his face, and I shouldn't know him if I stumbled over him. Second, it looks so like a rascally, low-bred trick, this tracking them and playing the spy, that I should be ashamed to tell any one of it but so old a friend as you."

"Well, then, never mind this mysterious couple any more," said Captain Macdonald, impatiently; "but tell me what I had better do about this advertisement."

"Why, go and see this 'H. Preston' at once, that's all. I'll go with you; it's not ten minutes' walk from here."

"But if it should prove to be a humbug?"

"Then trash H. Preston, write to the signet, within an inch of his life," said his peevish friend; "it's the only balm for a wounded mind I know of."

Captain Macdonald laughed, and the conversation turned on various matters as they walked on.

In a short time they reached the office of H. Preston—a dingy-looking old house, with his name over the door in exceedingly dingy letters.

Mr. Preston, a sharp, shrewd-looking little man, sat alone in his office when they entered. He pushed up his spectacles, and surveyed them keenly as they came in.

"You, I presume, are the H. Preston mentioned in this advertisement?" said Captain Macdonald, handing him the paper, and pointing to the advertisement.

"I am, sir. Can you give me any information concerning the parties in question?"

"Faith! he ought to, being the principal party in question himself," interposed Murray.

"How, sir—are you a relative of these Macdonalds of the Isle?" asked the attorney.

"Yes; the son of the Oscar Macdonald mentioned there."

"Ah! Are there any more of you? Is your father living?"

"No, he has been dead these four years; and there are no more of us, as you are pleased to term it, but one sister. May I ask what this affair is all about?"

"Certainly, Mr. Macdonald. You are aware, perhaps, you had an uncle in London Mr. Edward Dundas, the banker?"

"I knew it; wasn't I just saying the old gentleman was at the bottom of it?" said Captain Macdonald, giving Captain Macdonald a dig in the ribs.

"I am aware of that fact, sir. He was my mother's only brother."

"Exactly. Well, he is dead."

"Indeed!" said the young man, gravely. "Yes, sir, and having no heirs of his own, he has left his whole fortune to be divided equally between his sister's children. The sum is enormous; and I beg leave to congratulate you on your good fortune. For I do not know the exact amount, and for further particulars you will be necessary for you to visit London, where the lawyer who drew up the will resides. Here is his address. All you have to do is, to prove your identity, settle a few preliminaries, and take immediate possession of your fortune. Excuse me, gentlemen, I am very busy, and with your permission I will bid you good morning."

And the little lawyer bowed them politely out.

"Well, this is a slice of good luck!" exclaimed Murray. "Upon my word, Macdonald, you must have been born with a silver spoon in your mouth. I suppose you will start instantly for London?"

"Not instantly, my dear Murray. I must go and inform Helena of our good fortune. Dear, noble girl! for her sake I am truly thankful for this."

"Of course you ought to be; not many men are blessed with such a sister as that radiant, glorious Helena. Have you any objection to my accompanying you?"

"Delighted to have you, my dear fellow. Suppose we start now, we shall be at Macdonald's before dark."

"Just as you please, my dear sir. I suppose it will be a 'sight for sore eyes' to see her darling majesty again."

"Then why not see the minister who married them?"

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Ben's watching, met Herbert as often as ever. For that young gentleman would visit the cottage each day, and the little widow was always there to be hospitable to him that he came oftener than was exactly desirable. And so there was nothing to do, but to hope that Miss Helena would soon return to the Isle, and look after her lover herself, for Mrs. Ben was growing tired of it. Besides, she really liked the youth exceedingly, and would have thought him a paragon of perfection if he would be only less attentive to Jessie.

And Jessie, the shy little child-wife, had gone on dreaming "Love's young dream," and never thinking how terrible one day would be her waking.

Since the bridal-night, the mysterious phantom had never been seen; and both were beginning to hope it had only been an illusion of a heated imagination. Mr. Clinton had accounted for the terrifying shriek and Jessie's fainting fit in some ingenious way of his own that quite satisfied the old lady, and lulled to sleep any suspicions she might have conceived.

One evening, as Herbert set out to keep an appointment with Jessie, he observed Evan standing, or, rather, sitting perched upon a gate, shading his eyes with his hands, and looking anxiously out to sea.

"Well, my boy, what has caught your attention in that direction?—wild geese?"

"No, sir," said Evan, solemnly, "I see a sail."

"Well, and what of that?" said Mr. Clinton. "A sail is not such an unusual sight here, is it?"

"But there's a storm brewin', an' if the Lord ain't took special charge of that vessel the first land it makes will be Davy Jones's locker," said Evan.

"A storm, you blockhead!" exclaimed Clinton. "There is not a cloud in the sky."

"Jes' look over there, sir, and see that black cloud, about the size o' your hand."

"Well!" said Herbert.

"Pretty soon that will be all over the sky, and then we shall have a lashing squall. The vessel tell the wind's rain already, and you needn't be surprised if to-morrow mornin' you see the ruins o' that mawer spread all over the shore!"

And Evan, with a doleful shake of his head, descended from his perch and sought the house.

Ere the hour had passed, Evan's prognostications proved true. The heavens rapidly darkened, as dense, black, threatening clouds rolled over them; the sea became of an inky hue, crested with white, ghastly-looking foam, as it heaved and groined, "like a strong heart in strong agony." The wind rose, and crashed, with terrific force, through the woods, bending strong trees like reeds before its might.

"Oh, sir, it blows!" said Mrs. Ben, as she blustered in and out. "I declare to heaven, its almost took me right off my feet. I ain't heard such a wind these five year come Christmas, and then two ships were wrecked right off from the shore, and every soul perished. Dear, dear! what a sight it was next day, when all the drowned corpses were washed ashore. It was the most awful sight I ever saw. Fritz, don't let lay in there in the corner all night, to-morn' your shins they'll be very sore. Get up and pick the feathers out of that fowl!"

"I heard Evan saying there was a ship in view about an hour ago," said Clinton.

"Lord have mercy upon them then," said Mrs. Ben. "For if they touch the shore they'll be very sore. Get up and pick the feathers out of that fowl!"

"Oh, how dreadful!" said Jessie, turning pale with pity and horror.

"It's going to be an awful night. Just listen to the wind roarin' through the trees, and that rain. I never heard the waves boom on the beach as they're doing now, that a wreck didn't follow. It's a blessed Captain Macdonald and Miss Helena ain't on the sea this dreadful night. When they were away, I used to think of them in every storm. Lord preserve us! look at that!"

And with a piercing shriek she started Mrs. Ben sprang back.

A fierce gust of wind threatened to bring down the roof about their heads; a tempestuous dash of rain, as if the flood gates of heaven had opened for a second deluge, a blaze of blue, livid lightning, as though the whole firmament were one sheet of flame, a crash of thunder, as though heaven and earth were rending asunder.

With a wild cry of terror, Jessie sprang up, pale, trembling, horror-struck. Fritz crouched under a table in a remote corner. Neither dared to speak or move.

Mrs. Ben, forgetting her first involuntary alarm, sprang to close the shutters and make fast the doors. And Herbert, snatched at the suddenness with which the storm had arisen, bolted up his coat, preparatory to starting for the lodge ere it should further increase in violence.

"Oh, do not go, do not leave us!" cried Jessie, springing forward, pale, wild, and terror-stricken, plunging to him, scarcely conscious of what she did.

"Dearest love, do not tremble so, there is no danger," he whispered, encouragingly, endeavoring her slight waist with his arm.

But Mrs. Ben turning suddenly round, and beholding them in this position, a little of her panic was scandalized and indignation.

"Lord a mercy! you us, child, sit down—no, kneel down, and say your prayers. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to do such a thing. Mr. Clinton, I'd be obliged to you not to keep your arm round her that way. It doesn't look nice, nor likewise respectable."

But here Mrs. Ben's words were abruptly cut short, for across the stormy, raging sea, high above the roar and shrieking of the storm, pealed the minute gun of a ship in distress, like an agonized cry for help.

"Heaven be merciful! Listen to that!" exclaimed Mrs. Ben, turning pale.

Another fierce, tempestuous burst of wind and rain—another blinding glare of sultry lightning—another appalling peal of deafening thunder rent the air—and again boomed the minute-gun over the sea.

"Something must be done—something must be done!" cried Herbert, excited beyond measure at the thought of so many perishing almost within a dozen rods of where he stood. "Fritz, my boy, come with me, and with the assistance of Evan we may be able to save some of these perishing wretches."

"It's too wet," said a terrified voice from the corner, as its owner crunched into a still smaller hall.

But Mrs. Ben—who never forgot the practical, no matter what her alarm might be—went over, and taking the unfortunate youth by both ears, lifted him, with a jerk, to his feet.

With a howl of pain, Fritz extricated himself from her hands and clapped both his arms over his eyes. "Come, come, get your hat and overcoat, and go out with Mr. Clinton, and do whatever you can. And if he goes laying round, Mr. Clinton, just give him a good side of the head, and make him know his place."

Fritz, whose dread of the storm was far inferior to his dread of Mrs. Ben, dashed his coat and hat with amazing alacrity, and having told the former under his chin with a red handkerchief to keep it on, and ready to depart, wiping the tears from his eyes, first with the cuff of one sleeve and then with the other.

Herbert cast one look at Jessie, who had sunk on the floor, her face hidden in her lap, and then turned to depart, followed by the howling Fritz. The blinding gust of wind and rain that met them in the face nearly drove them back, but bending to the storm they resolutely plunged on, and it required all the strength of Mrs. Ben to close the door after them.

The storm seemed increasing in fury. The wind howled, raged and shrieked. The waves thundered with terrific force over the rocks, the thunder raised upon itself, shaking the very island to its center. The lightning alone lit up for an instant, with its blue, fiery red, the pitchy darkness, and then the crash of the strong trees in the neighboring forest, as they were violently torn up by the roots, all mingled together in a awful din.

But, above all, the mountain-gale came walling in more and more.

The two plunging so blindly through the storm hastened on as if winged at that sad din of sounds. And after tumbling, slipping, falling, rising, and hurrying on again, they reached the old castle at last.

A light was burning in the kitchen. Both rushed in there, wet, dripping, and half-blinded by the storm. Mrs. Mifflin rose on her knees in the middle of the floor, looking back and forward, and praying aloud in an agony of terror and apprehension, and Evan was walking up and down, groaning and praying, at intervals, with his mother.

"Come, come, come, come!" said Clinton, as he burst in upon them, dripping like a sea-god, "and you, Evan, get your coat and come with me down to the beach, and see if we cannot save some poor unfortunate from death and destruction."

"Indeed, Mr. Clinton, I cannot go out," said Evan, his teeth chattering like a pair of castanets.

"You villain, if you are not ready in ten minutes, I'll thrash you till you are not able to stir," exclaimed Herbert, catching and shaking him furiously.

Terrified by the young man's fierce tone to resist, Evan drew on his hat and coat, and shaking like an aspen leaf, followed them out into the night, and darkness and storm.

Once more over the tempest tossed waves rolled the mournful voice of the minute-gale, like a dying cry.

"Heaven, this is maddening!" exclaimed Herbert, rushing to the beach like one demoted. "To think they should perish thus, within reach of us almost, while we are here in safety. Fritz, where is your boat? I will venture out and see if I cannot save some one at least."

"Oh, Mr. Clinton, for heaven's sake, don't risk it!" cried Evan, in an agony of terror. "No boat could live two minutes in these waves."

"You couldn't launch the boat in these breakers," said Fritz, "much less pull, if you were into her."

"And they must perish before our very eyes! Heaven of heavens, this is awful!" Again he listened for the gun, but it came no more. His voice was silenced in storm and death.

"They have gone down," said Fritz. "The signal gun will fire no more."

"Heaven have mercy on their souls!" said Herbert, solemnly, lifting his hat.

"Auntie," said Evan, whose fears seemed swallowed up in awe.

"We may soon look out for the bodies," said Fritz, straining his eyes over the black, swirling waves.

Even as he spoke, by the blinding light of a glare of lightning, the lightning ceased to flash, and a spear, thrown violently on the sands near them. All sprang forward, and drew them up beyond the reach of the waves.

"Unfatten this rope," said Fritz, "and we will bring them up to the house. Perhaps they may not be drowned yet."

Looking pale still, after the terror and excitement of the previous night.

But Herbert's eyes did not linger a moment on her; they were fixed, as if fascinated, on another, who lay back in Mrs. Ben's arm-chair, propped up with pillows.

It was the woman, or rather the girl he had saved. What was there in that pale young face to make him start so vehemently, while the blood rushed in a crimson torrent to his very temples?

He only saw a small, slight figure, short, crisp, golden curls, clustering over a round, white, polished forehead, bright, sunny gray eyes, half veiled now under the long, silken eyelashes resting on the pearly cheek, a little rounded mouth, and a nose decidedly retroussé.

It was not a wonderfully pretty face, but there was something about it, something original, and charming about it, something that drew the eye, and high-spirited as you could see even in the pallor and languor. She might have been sixteen, though she scarcely looked so old as that.

She lay back now, with her little white hands folded modestly on her lap, her veiled eyes fixed upon them with a dreamy, abstracted look, as if of one whose thoughts are far away, replying for a moment to Mrs. Ben's casual question, "And how is your little girl?"

"My little girl, my dear, is just as usual, and as healthy as a horse, and as happy as a king. She is just as usual, and as healthy as a horse, and as happy as a king. She is just as usual, and as healthy as a horse, and as happy as a king."

"And how is your little girl?" asked Mrs. Ben, looking at her with a smile.

"My little girl, my dear, is just as usual, and as healthy as a horse, and as happy as a king. She is just as usual, and as healthy as a horse, and as happy as a king."

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"And how is your little girl?" asked Mrs. Ben, looking at her with a smile.

"So you know her?" said Mrs. Ben. "Who'd ever thought it! No that tall, dark, looking fellow, with all the whiskers and mustaches, is her husband? I declare if it isn't wonderful the way women will get married before they're out of short frocks. I just wish I had a daughter,—no, I mean if I had a daughter, I'd like to see her tryin' to get married at such an un-Christian age."

"I am turned marlet, and bent lower over her work than ever."

Herbert stood leaning with one arm on the mantelpiece, gazing thoughtfully into the fire.

"What did you say her name was?" inquired Mrs. Ben, sitting down, and beginning to knit.

"Mrs. Charles Vaughan, now, she was Fanny Trace when I last met her," he said, as if half speaking to himself.

"I suppose you've known her a long time?" continued Mrs. Ben.

"Yes, we were children together," he replied, in the same dreamy tone.

"And her husband—known him long?" pursued Mrs. Ben.

"Yes, I know him for a cruel, jealous, selfish, and utterly unprincipled fellow. He was a scoundrel, and he was a scoundrel."

"Well, you needn't make such a fuss about it," she exclaimed, recovering her self, and looking at him with a smile.

"Starting a body out to their work for nothing I suppose she knewed all that afore she took him."

"Pray pardon my vehemence, Mrs. Ben," said Herbert, recovering himself by an effort.

"I forgot myself for a moment. But this patient of yours, this Mr. Vaughan, may need a doctor. I am going over to Craig's End tonight, and if you wish I will bring one with me."

"It would be better," said Mrs. Ben, thoughtfully.

"He's got a tremendous cut right in his head. I did what I could for him, but, of course, a body would feel more satisfied if they had a regular doctor."

"I am not a doctor, but I should trust to my own judgment in such a case. I have been a doctor ever since I was a boy, and I have never been wrong yet."

"What were Herbert Clinton's thoughts, as sitting silently in the stem of the boat, he watched the dancing waves flash and sparkle in the sunlight, his mind was full of them."

"He had indulged in not long since, when, on one eventful night, he and Jessie had crossed it together. This Fanny Vaughan, with her pretty, pleasant face, and her sunny smile, had been his first love."

"He had been his first love, and he had been his first love, and he had been his first love."

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monstrous hatred of her idol, and a deadly wish to be revenged.

Starting suddenly up, she fled up the stairs, through the long, vaulted hall, out the front door, and took the path leading to Mrs. Ben's.

The bright moonlight lit all around with a pale, radiant glow. And, standing near a rock, commanding an extensive view of the sea, Jessie stood, enjoying the beauty of the night, when suddenly she was seized from behind, and fell back, and she looked up. Her vision was realized.

Helena McDonald stood glaring upon her, with her fierce, wild black eyes, her long hair streaming down her back, like an aroused tigress prepared to spring.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AFTER ALL.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, BY GLEN CAROL.

She came and sat beside him, in her own quiet and quiet fashion, putting up her small hand at times to smooth back the scattering hair from his white forehead. She was a frail, slight little thing, with eyes as brown as a bird's, and a wealth of rippling chestnut hair that fell around her shoulders, and far below her waist, enveloping her as in a veil. The expression of her face was singularly sweet and tender, and her clear eyes rested upon her betrothed lover with a wistful, unasked look that bespoke a heart ill at ease.

Arthur Fountain leaned back idly in his easy chair, and looked out at his promised bride, but past her away, away—down the river, where his raving eyes rested a moment, to watch the boats in their passage up and down the stream—and beyond the river, to the green and meadowy stretches away in the distance.

He seemed almost unaware of the gentle presence hovering so near him. Arthur Fountain had been his earliest remembrance, he had been his very first love, and he had been his very first love.

She was a very pretty widow, and no one was better aware of the fact than she was. Her long, silken tresses set off as plump and trim a figure as in a Dowdeshorough, and nowhere in the whole neighborhood could you find a brighter pair of brown eyes, or a more beautiful, charming face. I wonder why young widows are always pretty and charming? No matter how plain they may be before their husbands, go the way of all flesh, straightaway after that event takes place, and they come out in black dresses and the other accessories of a mourning toilet they are voted bewitching and so pretty. It is strange that such should be the case, but it seems to be the effect which widowhood has on them.

Why do some heartless creatures come down the river, and lean out to see who is going by just as a man came opposite her gate?

"Is that you, Mr. Fields?" she called out cheerily. "Good morning! pleasant weather, isn't it, after the storm last night?"

"Beautiful," stammered Mr. Fields, blushing up at her as a woman could have done, and appearing as awkward as an overgrown schoolboy on his first morning at school.

"Won't you come in?" asked the widow, smiling very sweetly, she brushed back her curls, which would persist in falling about her face in the most charming confusion, as she leaned out of the window.

"I can't this morning," stammered Mr. Fields. "I like to go with a stock full of business matters, and I have a very pretty face, but I'm rather in a hurry, you see."

"Come in this evening, then," urged the widow, "can't you? It's real loneliness. I wish you would, now, really Mr. Fields."

"I will," answered Mr. Fields. "I'll bring my chess-board and some along, if you've no objections, Mrs. Deane."

"I should be delighted to have you," answered the widow, smilingly. "I'm sure I can beat you, Mr. Fields."

"I shouldn't wonder," answered Mr. Fields. "I'm no match for women," he added with a very rosy face, and wondering how he was ever bold enough to say it.

"Oh, you naughty man!" cried the widow. "I shall beat you, just to pay you for that. See if I don't!"

"I dare say," responded Mr. Fields, as he bowed good-morning. "What a charming creature she is," he thought, as he passed on. "I'd be perfectly happy if she was Mrs. Fields. Here he had to blush at the idea of any woman being Mrs. Fields. I do believe she likes me, but I wouldn't dare to ask her, for anything. Every time I think of such a thing, my heart thumps just like a trip hammer against my ribs. I—I wish the woman had to ask me to be Mrs. Fields, if I dare to, but he hasn't spoken enough. How he does blush when I look at him! I came near laughing in his face, he looked so comical. I like him over so much, and I don't think I'd answer him no, if he asked me a certain question, but I don't believe he could master up courage enough to ask it. I don't see why he need be so bashful! I'm sure I'm not at all dignified and distant."

The widow looked more charming than ever when she sat in the parlor waiting for Mr. Fields that evening. She had on a new brown dress of just the precise shade to show off her clear complexion, and the little knot of blue ribbon at her throat was the least bit coquettish in its appearance. Her curls were tied up with a ribbon of the same pretty color, and the whole comely which she fastened over her pink ear made her look as youthful as she did the day she married Archie Deane, six years before.

She smiled when she looked at the plain wedding-ring upon her finger. Archie had been dead three years and over.

A step on the path announced that some one was coming. Pretty soon some one knocked. She went to the door, and admitted Mr. Fields.

"I thought it was you," she said, taking his hat. "Take that easy-chair, Mr. Fields. I'm ever so glad you came over. I get so lonesome, and a little sigh gave emphasis to the words."

Mr. Fields sighed too. He got lonesome sometimes in his bachelor quarters, but he would never have dared to say so for the world, with the widow's bright eyes looking square into his face.

The widow sat down and chatted away in her lively fashion. Mr. Fields kept watching her when he could do so without her seeing him. Once she looked up suddenly, and caught his eyes fixed on her face, and then he turned as red as the tea roses in the window, and just the faintest tinge of carnation came into her cheeks. It made her look even so much prettier. Mr. Fields thought, He almost wished she'd look up again and catch him watching her, if she'd blush in that way. Innocent man! he never dreamed that the widow was as well aware of his admiring glances as he was!

"Oh, our game of chess," cried the widow, suddenly. "I came near forgetting all about it. Did you bring the men and board, Mr. Fields?"

When Alice Wynn awoke to consciousness she was lying upon her own bed, in her quiet room at home. She tried to think why she was lying there, and what it was that had happened. Slowly memory returned to her, and she remembered being thrown violently from the carriage to the ground, and after that all was a blank until now. Some one was sitting at the foot of the bed—she could not see the face, but she heard a voice, low and tremulous with tears, breathing a prayer into the ears of the Infinite. "Bless her, O God, and my whole future life shall tell how deeply, how devotedly I love her!" The low tones, the prayer, the fall like a bomb upon her soul. The life-blood had almost ceased to throb through her veins, rushed from her heart in one overpowering tide, leaving her pale cheeks crimson, and, nailing with a roseate blush her brow.

"Archie!" she said softly, and started at the sound of her own voice, it had such a queer, pathetic little quaver running through it.

"Thank God!" he cried, starting up and gathering her poor little head closer—close to his breast.

"You love me now, Arthur?"

"Not more now than always, darling," he answered, pressing his lips to hers fondly, and divining in a moment her thoughts: "but remember my love shall be expressed in every look and tone. I have been a careless fellow, but this accident has taught me a lesson I shall never forget. Say you forgive me, Alice!"

"We all know what she said. And so it came about that they were happy after all!"

THE WIDOW'S WAGER.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, BY EREN E. REXFORD.

Widow Deane sat at the front window of her little parlor one morning, busy with some kind of fancy-work which showed off her plump, well-shaped hands, with the wedding ring sparkling on her left ring finger, as she looked out at the sea.

She was a very pretty widow, and no one was better aware of the fact than she was. Her long, silken tresses set off as plump and trim a figure as in a Dowdeshorough, and nowhere in the whole neighborhood could you find a brighter pair of brown eyes, or a more beautiful, charming face. I wonder why young widows are always pretty and charming? No matter how plain they may be before their husbands, go the way of all flesh, straightaway after that event takes place, and they come out in black dresses and the other accessories of a mourning toilet they are voted bewitching and so pretty. It is strange that such should be the case, but it seems to be the effect which widowhood has on them.

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"Come in this evening, then," urged the widow, "can't you? It's real loneliness. I wish you would, now, really Mr. Fields."

"I will," answered Mr. Fields. "I'll bring my chess-board and some along, if you've no objections, Mrs. Deane."

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"Oh, our game of chess," cried the widow, suddenly. "I came near forgetting all about it. Did you bring the men and board, Mr. Fields?"

"I put them on the centre table," answered Mr. Fields. The widow sat down and got the chess-board and men, and drew her chair up opposite Mr. Fields.

"I promised to beat you," she said, arranging the board on a little stand between them. "I'm going to do so if I possibly can, Mr. Fields. With an arch, glance into his face. Mr. Fields happened to be admiring her brown curls as she looked up, and the fact that she detected him in the act so disconnected him that he knocked over the chess-men she had arranged, and then he had to help her set them again, and it was hands came in contact on the board; some how the touch of the widow's plump white hand made him thrill all over with a delightful sensation, and he wondered, if the accidental touch of her fingers affected him so delightfully, what it must be to hold that hand in his? Poor Mr. Fields! He was very deeply in love, but he didn't dare to say so.

At length the board was arranged, and they were ready to open the game.

"Oh, you're a cunning fellow, aren't you?" wouldn't it be nice to have a wager? It would make the game so much more interesting! Don't you think so, Mr. Fields?"

Mr. Fields didn't know but it would.

"I'll tell you what," said the widow, blushing like a gillyflower pink, and making every bit as sweet, Mr. Fields thought; "read a story not long ago about two persons playing on a wager, and the stake was a kiss! Now I'll agree to kiss you if you beat, and if I beat, you shall kiss me! Isn't that fair?"

"Yes," stammered Mr. Fields, "but—I am afraid you'll beat!"

"Why, then you'll have to kiss me, that's all," laughed the widow. "If you beat, I'd just as lief kiss you as not. As likely as not you'll beat me."

"Well, I'll take the wager," answered Mr. Fields in desperation.

And so the game commenced. If ever he played to win, it was then. There was something very fascinating about the idea of kissing the widow, but he didn't believe he could master up courage enough to do it if he won the game. He much preferred that she should kiss him. He could stand it with considerable fortitude to be kissed, but to kiss was rather more than he could think of with composure. He never had kissed a woman, that he could remember, and he was sure he should make some awful mistake, if he tried to. But from the first the game went against him. His pawns were captured right and left, and then his bishops were taken from him. Then his king got in check, and he had to surrender the widow, and then, by one masterly move the widow planted a knight d'ally in front of the king's block, and left him in check with her castle, and cried out, "Check-mate!" her eyes sparkling with mischief.

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TERMS---Always in Advance.

CHANGE OF TERMS.

It is simply because *The Power* is an old paper, and has clung longer than it should have done to an old scale of prices, that suited the old, cheap times. No new literary paper, of the first-class, would think of putting its terms so extremely low. Of course, we exclude the large political weekly newspapers from this comparison, for they are generally simply reprints of the *daily* with which they are connected. While all the matter of a literary paper is prepared and set up expressly for it.

LETTERS FROM ZIG

The century plant, *Agave Americana*, gets its name from the Greek word *ageion*, noble, illustrious, probably from its being such a common, the illustration of the plant is a very good one. A displaced member of the family declared that he would as soon look at a sunflower. So would I, as far as the beauty of the thing is concerned. A cabbage is just as pretty, every bit as useful, and perfectly adapted to its purpose, and no mistake. It stands 27 feet from the ground up. It has a stem proper. The long, thick leaves, cut out long ones of them, start right out in a circle. The plant is a native of the tropics. In an old gardener's tradition that the plant must be a hundred years old before it blossoms, but that story, like many and many another, has tradition for its foundation. In fact, it blossoms any time from eight years old to seventy-five, according to locality. It is a tropical plant by nature, and blossoms earliest in South America, and latest in the north. It is said to be able to blossom at all, owing to the cold and dry weather.

They say there was one on the

The Agave is a plant of almost instant increase in size. In its native home, the people make bechees of it, make thresh, twine, and use part of the centre, very tough fibres of it, for the handles of the axes. The leaves are cut out in June, flowers for a year and a half, and the juice, distilled and fermented, forms a strange, intoxicating drink. Then they dig up the roots, put them into water and make a lather, exactly as you would a bar of soap, and do their washing with 'em. I should say that as utilizing the plant from top to bottom.

I haven't space to write any more concerning the Agave, and so to the top of the next page. I know if you care to find out any more about it, good friend, I refer you to the learned book herein above briefly noted from.

Zed

TOO BIG.

Dean Furr: Having been very similar

After steps, feeding Those close beside me,
 Although unseen,
 Though I have, through flowers, whether the tem-
 pest hide them,
 Or hasten secret,
 I fear Thy faithful love cannot betray,
 Thy love decay.
 I may not know, my God, no hand revealeth
 Thy guiding will;
 And the path a deepening shadow stealthily,
 No voice repelleth
 All my questions, till the time to tell,
 And it is well.
 We keep on, striving and a fearing
 The will away;
 Though a long century's rippling fruition,
 Or a short day's
 Communion, we have, and I can wait,
 If Thou come late.

THE LAST FOOTFALL.

ENTER FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
 1900-1901, 1901-1902, 1902-1903.

re a moment in this life sadder than that which we catch the sound of the last foot-
? That dreary echo, telling us but too
y that hope itself has perished.

FIVE LITTLE ONLYS.

Only a stray sunbeam! yet perchance it
cheered some once wretched abode, gladdened
a stricken heart, or its golden light has
led us in way through the lonely branches of
a tree, kissed the morning dew, sank here
and there, and shaded the beauty of
a lovely form. Only a gentle breeze! But
many aching brows hath it fanned, how
many hearts had been cheered by its gentle
whisk! Only a flower! But it left a sad,
quivering void in the child's heart; the quiver-
lips and tearful eyes told how keenly he
felt it. Only a smile! But oh, it cheered the
sorrowful, it gladdened the weeping, and
a halo of light around the unhappy lay
fell. Only a word of encouragement, a
kind word! It gave to the drooping spirit
life, and the steps pass on to victory.

FAIR PLAY:

[illegible]

And crushing his hat down over his eyes in the most uncomfortable manner, he met

the walk like a storm.

drunked she, and back starting, caught her foot something in, and to the floor fell.
 The whole table, as if I had downed the hammer kicked, up started. "Miserable Gotsend! Gotsend! Gotsend!" "Wicked quizzler!" they cried. And the Doctor rose to my aid, and said he thought that better leave I had, for insulted were the whole family that I to a Cold Water house could come, and for Lager Beer call.
 So to Sharon went I on, and to my friend at the large hotel did go. That day at dinner saw what? Of Grotius tunes and women's a whole party, of the same race and color, and comfortable looking, and not with one with an less of any kind, and not without her light Rhine Wine one. Zeeg-in our pipe which you perhaps do not use - put

iss Zeeg—Mrs. Zeeg, perhaps—for poor Zeeg's sake, hopes I not of you Americans.

Intellectual however and brilliant—what comes?
son whose mind is his body too much for—
and in the race intellectual who soon tires.
Thus keeps us the German woman, even

We Germans hold, that a Mother to be, demands of the vitality a share so great, that, in its installation, it is too closely followed by woman's her function, and her power, to ever impair itself. And when our German women we compare these new-fangled American Jan-Women with cheerful the ones, intended with their lot and sex, plump, intelligent, happy—cross the other, discontented with their lot and sex, thin, bristling with sharpness, and unhappy—we rather incline to laugh at, when we the latter hear of the former say, "German sisters, be glad like we women, emancipate yourselves to be. Especially your Rhine wine and Lager Beer give up—to Green Tea and

of these rosy, round bodies, and comfort

Paradise. The third, "the great river which" (Hiddekel, Daniel, x, 4, is generally admitted to be the Tigris. And as to the fourth (Euphrates), there is no dispute about it. Now, all these four rivers have their sources in the highlands of Armenia, and, as it is stated that it was "from the gardens" that they parted and became four rivers," it follows that the site of Paradise was that portion of Armenia in which these sources are found. Dr. Scott advances three objections to the theory that the face of the earth was changed by the deluge, the first of which he deems irrecoverably lost. The first objection, he says, it is by no means certain that Noah's flood was universal, in the strict meaning of that word, but, in arguing this, he violates his own principle of adhering to

error into the house, with a general impression that if she were not quite killed, she was, at least, mortally injured. Upon examination it turned out that she was scatheless,

found in the garden the missing article was found, reduced to the size of a ball of worsted, and of a very dark color prematurely changed to gray, and the concern being, generally speaking, "frizzled" beyond redemption. The change of color in the chignon is perhaps more remarkable than the wearer's escape from detection of a person's hair growing in a brief period to a color so different from common enough, but this is the first occasion within our knowledge of a chignon being similarly affected.

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BETROTHAL.

Oh, for one hour of such enchanted light
As made a fair day-time in the sky,
When on the willow bank we sat at night,
My mid-time love and I!

While we talked so low and tenderly,
We felt the listening trees above us lean;
And under that soft silence seemed to me
That fell at last between us.

Her heart lay floating on its quiet thought,
Like water-lilies on the tranquil lake;
And love within, unknown because it sought,
Lay dreaming, half awake.

Ah, love is lightest sleeper ever known!
A whisper, and he starts up to view;
And on the heavenly heights of our story grows,
While yet the moon was new.

And when she spoke, her voice seemed the white,
Sweetest for sweetness of the lips that told,
Setting a precious word within a smile—
A diamond ringed with gold.

Then bloomed for us the perfect creature flower;
Then filled the air the fragrance of the brain;
And all the state preconscious, that but
Chanted a bridal hymn.

Ah, time, all after-days may fly away,
Such joys as that that last but once to give,
And love is royal from his crowning day,
Though kingdoms change and ebb.

MIDGET'S FORTUNE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY ELIZA ARCHAID.

A child born in a lunatic asylum.
There is something unexplainably weird and
horrible about the thought of it. An infant
born of a crazy father and a crazy mother,
coming into a world of gibbering idiots and
lunatics, its half eyes staring out from the
iron gratings of a barred window, as the
first earthly object which awakens its new
born sight. The thought is hideous.

Just so a child was born twenty years ago.
It wasn't at Longview; it wasn't in the
Hudson Branch Lunatic Asylum at Day-
ton; and it wasn't at the new asylum which
is not built yet. It was at the Physio-Medi-
co-Philanthropic Home for the Insane, in a
sea-board state. It was a very high sound-
ing, pretentious place, it was an institution.
It was a Fatherly-Care-and-Motherly-
Kindness establishment, founded, built, and
set running by an eminent gentleman, (as
his reports said), "prompted solely by love
of humanity." Oh, yes! The lunatic
minds and manners were cared for on a
prodigious scale, and refining, elevating in-
fluences surrounded these unhappy, afflicted
lunatics with an invisible net strong enough to
catch a whale. Oh, yes! Nevertheless, a
child, the daughter of two lunatics, was born
there. This child was a terrible, monstrosity,
unheard-of child. The eminent gentleman
who had founded the P-M-P-H would not
undoubtedly have given this child a tender little
squeeze and sent it a better world, so much
did he love humanity, only for the imperi-
ous intervention of his corpulent physician.
How he did hope it would die! It would ruin
the P-M-P-H to the day of eternity's horn, and
after, if it should so much as cry out loud
but once.

The scandalous, unbecomingly light stranger
did not die. This began a fight for existence
from the time she was born. It being im-
possible, as aforesaid, for the eminent gen-
tleman who loved humanity to smother her
out of the world, the next thing to be done
was to smother her out of the P-M-P-H.
And here the important young assistant
physician stepped forward.

"I know the friends and family of the
unfortunate young woman who has involved
you in this embarrassment," he said calmly.
"I know, as well as you, that they are the
wealthiest and proudest people in Hamp-
stead. You know, as well as I, what the
consequences to you and this establishment
would be if this scandal should come to their
ears. I will undertake to relieve you of this
child in such a manner that nobody alive
other than the three persons who already
know of it shall be the wiser."

"For God's sake do it then," said the
eminent gentleman who loved humanity,
wholly unnerved.

The assistant, a handsome young fellow,
he was, with smooth, fresh cheeks and
brown, curly hair, called the attendant nurse
into the next room.

"Mrs. Grigg," he said, "I will get you a
situation in the Foundling Hospital. I want
you to go there and raise this child with you,
and never let her out of your arms from the
time you leave her till you are there. Keep
constant watch over her; take the best
possible care of her, till she comes to be
adopted by some family, and never lose
sight of her. Her name is Anna, the little
first name. Do this, and you shall have
half my earnings for the next five years."

"Give me your written promise for it,"
said the woman.

He wrote some lines on a bit of paper and
gave it to her.

"And you," he said, "I swear to me that
you will never divulge the parentage of this
child until I request you to do so."
"I swear it."

She was a middle-aged woman, who had
learned, as most lunatic attendants learn, to
keep a quiet tongue.

So the scandalous stranger went to the
Foundling Hospital. "A hard little knot,"
Mrs. Grigg called her, a rosy, lusty baby,
with no idea of consoling dying of any-
body's hands, not determined, in spite of
fate, to live and set her way through the
world with the best of them. And so she
did. Mrs. Grigg named her Anna, but no-
body called her Anna. From the restless,
vigorous movements of her sturdy
body, from the fact that she was never still
for a single moment except when she was
asleep, somebody with a gift for calling
names bestowed on her the pet appellation of
"Midget"; then everybody called her
Midget, and by and by nobody called her
anything else. She grew and thrived like a
June hollyhock—a bright, shrewd, queer
little Midget, yet a good-natured, pretty
Midget, whom everybody liked.

ing his boyhood, had fondly called him
"Graddy," but as he became older, and went
to school, the boys changed "Graddy" to
"Gruddy," and after that, around his native
region, he was nobody but Gruddy Barton.
He never seemed to outgrow the name
somehow. Everybody liked him, but nobody
thought he was any great thing, like enough
just because his name was Gruddy. It was
a scrubby name, and there is something in
a name wouldn't small as sweet if
you would call it by half a dozen other
names that one might mention.

Gruddy Barton was a good fellow. He
was very poor, poor and respectable, and
because he was poor was another reason why
he was nobody but Gruddy Barton. He had
a widowed mother, to whom he was the best
of sons. And there was a dogged perse-
verance and an intensity of feeling in the
man's soul which nobody suspected. That
was because he was nobody but Gruddy
Barton. In time Gruddy Barton studied
medicine, and became a starving doctor. He
lived on bread and milk while he attend-
ed lectures, but even his own mother never
knew it. He asked for a farm laborer to
pay for his board and tuition, and set up
half the night to study, but nobody noticed
him particularly, or commended him for it,
because he was nobody but Gruddy Barton.

"I'll be nobody but Gruddy Barton to the
end of the world," he said to himself, for-
mally sometimes. The poor fellow lived on
half-cry to himself now and then, walking
with tired feet over his lonely, discouraging
way. And just about the time of his begin-
ning the world as a starving doctor, the
crowning misfortune of his life befell him, an
expected life happened. He died desperately
in love with Miss Anna Lagrange, the belle
and great heiress of Hampstead, as hand-
some a young lady, and as vain, heartless
and wicked a coquette as ever lived. (One
summer, for an idle frolic, during a scarcity
of higher admirers, she deliberately "bailed
out" Gruddy Barton, and so wrote about the
silk net of her fascination, so be-
devilled him with her beauty and grace that
the poor, honest, green young fellow no
longer knew whether he stood on his heels
or his head. And Anna L. grange, and all
the high and mighty Dinglekars and La-
granges, the great Gaffneys and Johnstons
laughed at it till their sides ached.)

"You'd never guess in this world who's in
love with our Anna now," said the Lagrange
to the Dinglekars, and the Dinglekars in
their turn to the Gaffneys and Johnstons.
"Who? Who? Who?" chimed in the
grand old chums of all the Dinglekars,
and Gaffneys and Johnstons.

"It's nobody but Gruddy Barton!"
"Oh! Oh! Oh!" chorused the Dingle-
kars and Gaffneys and Johnstons.

By and by the poor, simple soul was fool-
ish enough to do what anybody but Gruddy
would have known better than to do, he
ventured to go to the house of the
trembling little spark of hope which
twinkled in his silly bosom, all ready to burst
into a mighty, devouring flame at his bid-
ding. Miss Lagrange was never so aston-
ished in her life. She had never dreamed of
such a thing. She turned up her nose
and then she turned it down again, and
then she laughed in the poor fellow's face,
and "just about that time," as the school-
book's history says, it began dimly to
dawn upon Gruddy Barton's bedazed under-
standing that he had been made game of by
a good-for-nothing flirt. And for the first
time in his life, and let us hope the last time,
Gruddy Barton swore at a woman.

"Why, dash it, Miss," he exclaimed, "what
do you think of yourself? You call yourself
a lady! I call you an unprincipled, wicked
creature as ever took the best part of a man's
life out of him and put it under her feet.
I'll not forget you for this."

Miss Lagrange reddened, and begged to
be excused. She began to cry for existence
from the time she was born. It being im-
possible, as aforesaid, for the eminent gen-
tleman who loved humanity to smother her
out of the world, the next thing to be done
was to smother her out of the P-M-P-H.
And here the important young assistant
physician stepped forward.

"I know the friends and family of the
unfortunate young woman who has involved
you in this embarrassment," he said calmly.
"I know, as well as you, that they are the
wealthiest and proudest people in Hamp-
stead. You know, as well as I, what the
consequences to you and this establishment
would be if this scandal should come to their
ears. I will undertake to relieve you of this
child in such a manner that nobody alive
other than the three persons who already
know of it shall be the wiser."

"For God's sake do it then," said the
eminent gentleman who loved humanity,
wholly unnerved.

The assistant, a handsome young fellow,
he was, with smooth, fresh cheeks and
brown, curly hair, called the attendant nurse
into the next room.

"Mrs. Grigg," he said, "I will get you a
situation in the Foundling Hospital. I want
you to go there and raise this child with you,
and never let her out of your arms from the
time you leave her till you are there. Keep
constant watch over her; take the best
possible care of her, till she comes to be
adopted by some family, and never lose
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ful, accomplished girl was sent to the P.M.
for care and treatment. She was at no time
dangerous or evil-tempered—but always mild
and obedient, very different from the
high-spirited, wilful creature of old. Dr.
Barton sighed sorrowfully as he looked at
the sad wreck, but all his love for her was
long since dead. She had murdered that
herself. She no longer knew him, or any of
her friends any more, but looked at all alike,
with the same vague, unconcerning stare.
From her being so mild and docile, she was
not shut up in the wards with the rest, ex-
cept at night, but was allowed the liberty of
the grounds and garden. The same privi-
leges were allowed to a few of the other in-
mates, both men and women, who were
trusty. Dr. Barton insisted that it was bet-
ter for them, bodily and mentally, to be in
the open air as much as possible, and so,
under the eye of an attendant, these few
were allowed out. Weeks lengthened out
into months, until the poor heiress had be-
come well nigh a year. Dr. Barton, attend-
ing her with untiring care and patience,
watched eagerly for some trace of returning
intelligence, but none came. There was not a
sign of improvement.

At the end of a year, the hideous, shock-
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totally unplaceable, gave birth to a daugh-
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grandchild, from all the other world. It is
not easy to penetrate the secrets, dread secrets,
sometimes, of a lunatic asylum. It is a
smaller world, revolving inside of a larger
one, and within the mysterious, unknown
realms of the small world, things are done
which the large world never finds out.

The parents of Anna Lagrange never
knew what had happened to her. Anna
Lagrange herself never knew it in this
world.

But no shadow of her weird, darkly-
clouded birth hung over the rosy little girl.
Anna Lagrange could not have had a fairer,
brighter daughter in her sunniest days. The
child was happy as a bird all day long, and
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arguing that a pretty girl's no generally
mean't ya.
"I'm going to be an old maid," returned
Midget shortly.

"Anything on earth but a forlorn old
spinster!" said Uncle Tom.
"Anything on earth but a forlorn old
widower!" retorted Midget. "But the sad-
dest feature about being an old maid is,
when you're alone, being between the third
and fourth, to begin to be considered the
lawful game of every shabby, tobacco-
chewing old widower who's too stingy to hire a
housekeeper. It's downright degrading!"

"Humph!" remarked the widower, smil-
ing a very very superior smile.
"Uncle Tom Dinglekar, you can just
pack up and go off with the rest of 'em
around the lakes. When I'm married, it
won't be to a man old enough to be my
father. You can set that down."

"Hav'nt Miss Midget said a new voice.
It was Dr. Barton who stood there in the
hall, smiling a very broad smile under his
brown mustache.

Midget twisted her mop till the drops of
dirt water fell off in a shower.
"The fancies are all gone for a summer
torn around the lakes," she said. "There's
nobody left but you and me."

"And what do you do here by yourself all
the time?"
"Do my work—and when that is done, I
study history, and when I am tired of
everything—sometimes I sit and think what
new dresses I would get if I could go a tour
around the lakes too."

"You study history, sometimes, do you?
Did Mrs. Dinglekar put you up to that?"
"Not she. She never said but to see
a goose about it. I got it out of my own
head, I think, maybe remembered it from
the good old times when I hoped to be some-
thing else than Madame Dinglekar's scrub-
bing."

"Like it?" Midget gave the mop a vicious
kick, and went whirling down the steps.
Dr. Barton—did you ever dream of wait-
ing down the grand old church full of
grand people, in your bare feet, with hardly
any clothing on you, and all the grand peo-
ple staring at you? That is how I've felt
for four years, here among these people.
When she went on, past-midnight, clasping
her slender brown hands, "I used to see
such glorious things about me in this
world—music, poetry, pictures, science, all
that a grand, rich, full life may see and
know. I could not learn fast enough. The
world was full of treasures for me then, the
sky was full, the very air was full of a
mysterious music. And what is left to me
of it all now? This!" She went down the
steps, and mournfully picked up the old
mop.

"Good God!" said the doctor, quickly.
"You shall have it all back again, my poor
Midget, every bit."

The doctor came two or three times a
week after that. He heard her history les-
sons, brought her books of poetry, read to
her of olden times, and took her to a
picture-gallery once.

The Dinglekars came back in course of
time, too. The cook, greatly scandalized,
reported the strange goings-on of Midget.
Mrs. Dinglekar summoned the girl to a
hearing.

"I say you've been trying to attract the
attention of Dr. Alphonso, have you? The
cook says so."

"It's a lie!" retorted Midget, angrily.
"And you'll be trying to marry him next,
I dare say. You've got your eye on him,
I dare say. You're trying to get your
head above your proper sphere," went on
madame. "I'd like to know how you came
by them, for my part."

"I wouldn't marry your old Dr. Alphonso
if he was a prince, and made of gold. I
don't admire doctors or snobs, ma'am. Es-
pecially snobs, ma'am."

A change had come over the aristocratic
spirit of the Lagranges, and the Dinglekars,
the Gaffneys, and the Johnstons, and even
the Dinglekars, the Gaffneys, and the John-
stons, in the last sixteen years, had changed
the mind of many a Gaffney and many a
Dinglekar in this world. Dr. Alphonso (Garde
Barton was no longer nobody. He was
among the most important nobodies in
Hampstead. He began his career at the
lunatic asylum, after that he went to Eu-
rope for several years, working like a beaver
all the while, and learning more in one year
than that simple, plodding, earnest way of
his, that busy another student in ten
years. He took of his whole half-million to
expedition, and wandered half over
the world, still working prodigiously, filling his
clear, eager brain with untold treasures,
useful and ornamental. He came home, a
tanned, handsome, robust man, already
famous in the scientific circles of his
land and abroad. He published a college text-
book, which was absolute perfection, he
wrote a few essays for magazines, one essay
of which had more logic and learning in it
than an ordinary scientific article have.
Then he returned to his old life, and went
to being President, in a few days the *non plus*
ultra of the ambition of every American
boy and girl—he became a lecturer. (Don't
say I made a ridiculous blunder in the
last sentence. I didn't. That's what I
mean.) And he became so famous as his
gentle heart and child-like modesty would
let him. Then suddenly all Hampstead,
even up to the very last penny, white-headed,
scruffy old of a dandy, got out
to see the skill of Dr. Barton, in his
suits, to be proud of, to lounge in, to
suckle, to make much of. The Dinglekars
and the Lagranges loved him enough to eat
him. In these days Madame Dinglekar had
a lovely daughter, two years older than poor
Anna L. who sat at the feet of Dr. Barton
and with a sweet and child-like innocency
that was touching to behold, made believe
to study geology.

All this time Dr. Barton had totally for-
gotten poor Midget. To be sure he knew of
her existence, knew that she had lived with
Antony Grigg until that good soul was so un-
happy as to marry a worthless husband, also
that she was now living out as the servant
of her own aunt. He had even seen her a
few times. But beyond that he knew of her
he had not thought of her, or considered him-
self in any way responsible for her. His
heart smote him bitterly now, though, re-
membering his own forlorn, neglected child-
hood. And he said to Mrs. Dinglekar:

"Look at me now!" he said to himself, as
he thought only of himself, and my own petty
interests, frittering away whole hours with
those snobs of Dinglekars, who wouldn't
have wiped their shoes on my twenty years
ago, and that poor child, with the beauty
and the wit of a whole meeting-house full of
Dinglekars, is pining to death in the Dingle-
kar kitchen. I never felt so mean
in my whole life."

And he said to Mrs. Dinglekar:
"That Midget of yours is a beauty and a
genius. Why don't you educate her?"

Madame Dinglekar rolled her eyes as she
had seen Westral do in *The Forsaken*.
Then she rolled them down again.

"I've got to," she said, in a voice
of surprised honey. She always called him
Alphonso, sometimes "dear Alphonso."
"We are such old, old friends, you know,"
was what she did for you know.

There isn't the signal of her in Hamp-
stead with her long hair and her old dress,
he added, artfully. "It'd be a reproach to
everybody who knows her if she isn't edu-
cated in a manner worthy of her wonderful
abilities. In fact, I'm going to do it my-
self."

"A flush of intense mortification and anger
flooded momentarily across Mrs. Dinglekar's
face. She passed her lace and cambric
handkerchief lightly over her countenance,
and when she removed the bit of lace, her
face was fair and sweet and cool as a plate
of ice cream.

"My dear Alphonso," she said in her but-
tery tones, "it will give me great pleasure
to assist you in such a benevolent under-
taking. Genius is not confined to rank or
place. Wonderfully gifted persons some-
times spring from the very lowest classes.
And when your judgment pronounces a ser-
vant beautiful and gifted, I know that there
can be no mistake, and it will be a privilege
to me to aid your generous work."

"I'm an idiot, ma'am, and never saw
lower sugar pills," said the doctor, grimly.
The gladdest, thankful, lightest heart in
Hampstead that night was the heart of
poor Midget Foundling. And the next day
she went away to school, to dream out
and work out the happy dreams of her child-
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Let us go back sixteen years. Let us go
back to the Physio-Medico-Philanthropic
Home of the Insane, founded and carried
on by an eminent gentleman prompted solely
by love of humanity. In short, let us go
back to the time when Anna Lagrange
was very happily she recovered her health
and her mind after the birth of Midget. The
brightest came back to her eyes, the pink
bloom to her cheeks. Gradually her step

Turn spring into Midget's eye. She looked forward on the doctor's hand.

"Dear guardian, I'll never leave you," she said softly.

Masters went on till Midget was twenty, beautiful, gifted and good, and the doctor, now forty, not so very old, yet one, but very old to himself when he thought of Midget. For the manly, brown-haired doctor idealized Midget, not as his daughter or his ward, but as the one woman of all the world whom he would choose for his wife. He came to one day and said down at the window opposite Midget. Very beautiful she was, sitting there in her white dress, with her hair in her dark hair. The doctor sighed to himself, and felt very old indeed.

"Midget," he said, "I'm going away to South America with an exploring party, to be gone two years, maybe longer."

"Is this a sudden resolve, dear guardian?"

"It is not sudden, my child. I've felt for a long time, Midget, that I was but a tiresome, dull old fellow, and that I would rather go away for a while."

Midget turned her head away and looked slightly out of the window.

"What are you thinking, my child?"

"I am thinking how very, very much I shall miss the dear hand which has smoothed all the wrinkles out of my life."

"Would you like to go with me, Midget?"

"Oh, above all things," she answered, turning toward him. Then suddenly a deep blush dyed her face, and she turned away instantly again. The doctor watched her nervously.

"Midget, I have two offers of marriage for you. One is from a handsome, rich young gentleman, of unquestionable mind, morals and manners. If you like him well enough, I should advise you by all means to accept him."

"His name?"

"Charles Langhorn."

She smiled her pretty nose in disdain.

"Marry that boy, Doctor Barton? Why, I'm at least forty years older than he is."

"He's twenty-five and a half," said the doctor.

She shook her head. "Who is the other one?" she asked.

"He's neither rich, handsome nor young, but a cracked, dull old fellow, whom I shouldn't recommend as a husband under any circumstances."

"I think I should like him," said Midget.

"What's his name?"

"He is an old lover of your beautiful mother, Midget. She reported him more than twenty years ago, and that made him an old bachelor, mistrustful of all women-kind. He had a lovely, disconcerting child and youth, like your own, Midget, with no friendly hand to help him up a little. But he worked on patiently and quietly, quite alone, until by and by he had taken himself up. The world looked very different to him then. He stood where he could reach out his own hand to other poor, tired workers, and give them a lift up the fireless road. If he has not done it when he could, now he never will. About this time he saw you, four years ago, or more, and became interested in you then, first because you were so friendly and neglected, so like what he had been himself, then next because of your own beloved self, so near your own beautiful, even then. Your lovely mother was a widow at that time, and it is no vanity or breach of honor now to say that she would willingly have married the old bachelor whom she refused in her youth. But the charm has vanished. I think the old bachelor must have loved you even then, Midget, dear. At any rate, I know now that the love of his youth for your beautiful mother was but a pale shadow compared to the mighty, passionate, enduring love for you, in the corner of his old room now in the days of his old bachelorhood."

She leaned her forehead on the window sill, so that the dark curls covered her face entirely.

"You have not told me his name," she said, almost in a whisper.

He parted the dark hair from off her sweet face with his two hands.

"Look up, darling, and say that the lovely old bachelor may tell you his name."

She had her face against his breast.

"Would you like to go to Brazil with me, my child?" he said.

"Oh, above all things," she answered, lifting up her head merrily, but blushing again.

"Didn't you tell Uncle Tom Dingleclaker that you would never marry a man old enough to be your father?"

"Dr. Barton," answered Midget, "I've noticed all my life that just as sure as I set my foot down I want to do a thing, that is exactly the thing which, in the corner of my eye, I find myself doing. It never fails."

For their wedding trip they went to South America, among the huge snakes, and parrots, and ant-eaters and chattering monkeys. Then they came back, and lived happily in a beautiful home forever after. Mrs. Dingleclaker calls Midget "Mrs. Alphonso" to her friends, and is very proud to be regarded as a friend to the doctor's wife, to whom she is exceedingly gracious, especially since her own daughter, Annette, has lately drawn a grand prize in the matrimonial lottery.

An old man lives with Midget and the doctor, a white-headed, harmless, gentle old man. He is a lunatic, but so kind, useful, and lovable, that he is a much pleasanter nuisance than many folks who are in their right senses. People say that the doctor became so much attached to him in the L'Annie Asylum, that now, when he has a wife and home of his own, he has brought the old man away from the asylum, and will keep him to the end of his days. He is a German.

The white-headed, gentle old man, with the dark, dreamy eyes, is Mrs. Dr. Barton's father.

First, gentle blood flows in the veins of Midget. She inherits all her fine artistic tastes and talents from this old man. He was an unfortunate exile of '48, a gifted, cultured, brave gentleman in his own land, a nobleman who was so unhappy as to take the wrong side. Aye, but the wrong side of '48 will be the right side, in some coming day, not so very far off either. The affection of the gentle, graceful old man for Midget, is unquestionably loving. He always calls her "Annette," and believes she is his sister whom he left behind years ago in the Fatherland.

And now you know the true story of Midget's fortune.

How low has a five-legged mule, and its owner did not know what the fifth foot was for until the other day, when he attempted to tighten up the breeching before going down hill. The doctors who patched him up said they never saw three prettier lines stuck in all their army experience. The mule can stand on his two fore feet and kick with all three of his hind feet, and to see him when he is in motion reminds the spectator of a buzz saw.

A sad story is told in Paris apropos of the death of Miss Charlotte. She made her debut on the Paris boards when only twenty years of age—a fine-looking girl, with a sunny face and dramatic talent. In an altercation with her lover, occasioned by his jealousy, she threw a bottle of aqua-forte in her face, which so disfigured it that she never again appeared in public. Just before her death, Miss Charlotte received the sum of 100 francs from the Government to relieve her necessities.

A BLACK SHEEP IN THE FOLD. OR, THE SECRET FEUD.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY BETT WINWOOD.

Honoria Vance stood there silently a moment, then she said, "Here you have it—Victor Rayham is a married man."

"A married man?" Dora asked, her mind utterly refusing to accept those words as serious.

"I said so. And I am his wife!"

Victor leaped up like a dead man gasping into life. "It is false!" he shrieked.

"It is true," said Honoria, calmly. "And here is my proof."

She produced a folded paper from her bosom, deliberately spread it open, and held it out to Dora.

The poor girl trembled and hesitated, but at last took the paper and glanced over it. She grew deadly pale as she did so, and stared against a tree to save herself from falling.

"What is it?" asked Victor in a wild whisper.

She shrunk away from him as if his touch would have been contamination, but suffered the paper to flutter to his feet.

He picked it up. It was a marriage certificate in which his name and Honoria Vance's name were joined.

"That paper is a base forgery," he said, and flung it from him.

Honoria sought for it, and restored it to its old place in the bosom of her dress. "It seems valuable to you, sir," she said, with cutting scorn. "But I would not part with it for a fortune."

"It is a forgery," he repeated. "Dora, come away with me. That woman is mad. For some purpose or other, I know not what, she is plotting my ruin."

Dora hesitated, and seemed to struggle with herself. It was terrible to see the doubt, agony and fear written on her expressive countenance.

"I have nothing more to say," she said, and fixed them on Honoria. "What have you to say to me?" she cried. "Now that I have heard so much, I will not go away without hearing your side of the story from beginning to end."

"I have nothing more to tell," she answered in a tone of ill-concealed triumph. "If you are a true woman it is quite enough for you to know that Victor Rayham is my husband, and can never be yours."

The short talk. "It is enough, madam. I am not so lost to a sense of honor that I could set myself up for the rival of a married woman."

With that she was turning away with the untold pride and dignity of a lady, when Victor put out his trembling hand and detained her by the wrist.

"Do not go, my darling," he pleaded. "This woman is an impostor. She is no more to me. Don't be deceived by a few plausible speeches prepared beforehand to compass my ruin."

She looked at him sternly and angrily. "What object has this lady to gain in your ruin, Mr. Rayham? Answer me that!"

He groaned, and said:

"Alas, I do not know. There is some mystery here. Wait for this, my dear, wait before you pronounce judgment upon me, until I have had something to bring the truth to light."

"Oh, you villain!" she cried out in a passion of anger and wounded love. "You do not even pretend that this lady is a stranger!"

"No."

"Then why should I wait for you to conjure up a new tissue of falsehoods? Just heaven! I was trying to love and trust you in spite of everything, like the poor foolish creature I am, but my eyes are open at last. I believe you are less than I ever thought you."

CHAPTER XVI.
THE OLD LOOK AND THE NEW.

Those last words of Dora were like a blow to Victor. They shut him off from all sympathy. They killed the last weak hope that was struggling in his breast.

"Lost! undone!" he said to himself. "These exclamations, instead of working upon the tender feelings of the girl's heart, as they must have done under other circumstances, seemed to deepen the fiery indignation that was burning within her."

"You have only yourself to blame for what has happened," she cried. "You've played the part of a coward and a miscreant from first to last. There is no truth in you. I said once that I would never doubt you again. I was a blind fool, and not responsible for my own speeches. Now, I say I will never trust you again, Mr. Victor, Victor, you have broken my heart."

She had been growing more and more hysterical all through her little speech. At its close she broke down utterly, and the better tears of shame and anguish trickled through her fingers.

Honoria stood by, perfectly passive and unmoved. Not as with Victor. His poor lip quivered at the sight of her misery. He forgot her scorn, her words of anger and reproach, and tottering forward, threw his arms round her neck, and mingled his tears with hers.

Dora was powerless to repulse him. Indeed, she was scarcely conscious of what he was doing, until Honoria's cold, jeering tones broke sharply upon her ears.

"That certificate of yours, which seems to be highly valued by yourself, but which I never appreciated the lacrimose. Besides, it isn't just the thing to look on and see your own husband crying like a baby with his arms round another woman's neck."

Those cutting words brought the lovers to their senses. They sprang apart, and Dora flushed crimson with mortification.

"I deserve the taunt, madam," she said, humbly. "I forgot myself for a moment, but you shall see no further signs of weakness from me."

"Humph! I put it to yourself if I was not justified by circumstances in speaking as I did?"

"I have already intimated that you were," said Victor, who broke out, loudly and angrily. "Honoria Vance—Honoria Peyton—whichever you may be pleased to call yourself, you have no right to come between me and the woman I love. You know that you have no right. You are not my wife. That certificate is a forgery, and you a base impostor."

"So you have said before," she returned, coolly.

"And I intend to repeat it."

Her lip curled in haughty disdain.

"Do so," she answered. "Much good will it do you. The proofs happen to be of a sort that cannot be disputed."

"Leaving that bit of paper out of the question, they are the person who married me and the witness who was present on the occasion."

Victor hung his head. The confident tone in which she spoke did not escape his observation. It was not a tone she would have dared to make use of unless pretty sure of her position.

"I see you have laid your trap well," she groaned. "Perhaps you will do me the favor to tell me why you wish to pass yourself off as my wife?"

She shrugged her shoulders, declining to reply.

"If it is money you want, name your price, and it shall be paid, and you will be spared the sin of blasting the lives of two innocent persons who never did you harm."

She smiled at that, and said, quickly:

"Pray, listen, Miss Desmond. He is trying to buy me off."

The poor girl was unable to repress a moan. It did look as if Honoria had said, as if Victor was trying to bribe her to keep silent.

"In his next breath," the stern added. "I presume he will deny having known me and loved me while he was taking his college course at Longdown."

There was a brief silence, during which Victor seemed to be struggling with himself.

"No, I shall not deny having known you at Longdown," he said, at last. "It is also true that I flirted with you more than a little. But you never struck a spark of true love into life in my bosom, and never would."

Honoria winced, but said nothing.

"I never loved but one woman, he went on, fixing a reproachful look upon Dora. "And that was my heart's affection, which I will never transfer to another."

"All very fine," answered Honoria. "But you ought to remember that such speeches are gall and wormwood to me. I can't bear them. Indeed, indeed I cannot."

Her face was as white as a sheet, and she spoke wildly. Evidently that interview had not passed without bringing its weight of anguish to her as well as to the others.

Of a sudden fresh footsteps sounded in the walk. The three looked at each other in silent expectancy. There was a brief delay, and then Victor Rayham confronted them, turning a sudden bend that brought him directly upon them.

He seemed surprised, and a little taken aback. Only for a moment, however. Then he turned to his hand to Honoria, and said, pleasantly:

"Well met. I'm delighted to see you in my mother's grounds."

Dora stepped forward. "Tell me," she said, hastily, "if you know this lady? Tell me, if you can, her name?"

"I do know her, and her name is Honoria Vance."

Dora looked at him sharply and distrustfully. There was a latent hope, as well as silent suspicion shining in her lovely eyes.

"When I first saw her in those grounds, I did not know her, but when we first saw her in these very grounds, the day of your return from your southern tour?"

"No," he smiled brightly and unconcernedly as he said answer. "Do you intend to call me a second time? Very good, I did not recognize her—at least fully. And when you called her name Peyton, I was thrown completely in the dark."

"Peyton was my mother's maiden name," put in Honoria. "I chose to assume it for various reasons when I came to L'Annie."

Dora had scarcely heard her. She was still regarding Victor somewhat distrustfully.

"You seemed to know Miss Vance readily enough just now, so I feel as if a cold blast of air had blown over her."

A brief silence fell. Dora stood nervously clapping and unclapping her hands. She found it very hard to go on with what she had to say.

"Where you made Miss Vance's acquaintance?"

"Certainly. It was at Longdown while Victor and I were in college. Victor was very intimate with her at the time—oh, my friends! I do not know how to tell you."

He playfully tapped Victor on the shoulder. The young man moved away from him with a half-suppressed groan.

Then, for the first time, Victor seemed to observe that something was wrong.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "What are you all looking so glum about?"

Nobody answered him directly. Then Honoria produced the certificate, and said shortly:

"Read that. It tells its own story. I claim to be Victor's brother's wife. He denies my claim. But I am determined to push it, and never to give it up. I've been neglected, and left to care for myself, quite long enough."

Victor looked surprised and shocked.

"What a story! Victor, he's a liar! He's a liar!" she cried, and never even dreamed of committing such folly. That certificate is a forgery."

"No!" cried Victor, sharply. "As heaven hears me, no! He is trying to impose on me, as he imposed on poor Dora. I will not be trifled with by a man who is guilty of committing such folly. That certificate is a forgery."

"It seems to be genuine,"

"It is genuine," exclaimed Honoria. "Victor stared from one to the other with the incredulous and ghastly face of a man who has received a terrible shock."

"Who am I to believe?" he said, faintly. "Who has told me the truth?"

Victor strode up to him almost fiercely. "Did I not tell you a lie?" he demanded.

"No, no."

"Then I shall not begin by telling you one now. You have no right to doubt me. Drive that shameless creature away. Tell her to her face that you know how false and vile she is. Tell her that at last, I shall have my revenge. Try to bear up, or I shall lose all heart myself. The blow falls heavier on you than on anybody else. Oh, do try to bear up under it."

Her lip curled in haughty disdain.

"You think that woman's story is true?" he murmured, faintly. "You think she is his wife?"

"How can I tell?" he broke out sharply. "Then his mood softened in an instant. 'Don't ask me to take sides against my brother,' he pleaded. 'I can't do it—I can't do it—even for you, Dora.'"

CHAPTER XXII.
RETRIBUTION.

The poor girl seemed instantly to comprehend why he was reluctant to speak more plainly.

"Take me away," she entreated, clinging tightly to Victor's arm. "I do not need

to hear another word. You are the only person here in whom I can feel a particle of confidence. Oh, take me away!"

"I will take you away," he said, nothing, and three his arm round her waist, for a while he was nearly blind with grief, and led her into the path.

A groan burst from Victor when he saw this movement, and that she did not once look back to the spot where he was left standing.

"Have you no word for me, Dora?" he called after her.

She neither turned her head nor answered him.

"Faster," she cried, impatiently to Victor. "Faster! I should die if we were to linger much longer near those two. Oh, the misery and shame of being made to suffer by them!"

There was infinite contempt in her tone, and infinite hatred of herself that she should be weak enough to betray her agony to others.

"Faster!" she cried again, and hurried onward so rapidly that Victor found it difficult to keep pace with her.

"Oh, how hard I tried to trust him! How hard I tried to believe he was good and honest and true in spite of everything!" she moaned, once or twice. "But I shall never believe in anybody or anything again."

"Poor, poor Dora!"

And this was all the young man could say to comfort her, though his face was whiter than her own, and his lips colorless and quivering.

She was calmer by the time they reached the house. Your mother must not know of this," she said, stopping Vincent on the steps. "She has trouble enough already. Don't add to the burden that she has to bear."

"No, we will keep it from her, if we can," he said. "I will not surprise her very much to know that I have broken off my engagement with Victor. I can readily account to her for having done so."

She was thinking of what had transpired that night at Hook Dock. Mrs. Rayham could easily be led to believe that pride alone had caused her to break with Victor.

"Then it is really all over between you and my wretched brother?" said Vincent, sadly.

"All over between us?" she repeated. "Of course it is. Do you think I am capable of competing with a married man?"

"No. But Victor denies the marriage."

"You saw the certificate, and so did I."

"It may be a forgery, as he declares it to be."

"I know better," she cried, indignantly. "Would any woman in her senses stand up before us and declare she is his wife unless she is really what she claims to be? No, no, no."

Vincent hid his face in his hands and was silent for some seconds. But he shook from head to foot with anguish he could not wholly conceal.

"Since there is a doubt in this matter, you ought to give Victor the full benefit of it," he said at last.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Please bear in mind that you have only Honoria's word and that certificate, against my brother's solemn assertions. Is it not possible that he may be in the right?"

Dora started, and a faint, very faint, glow of hope broke over her lovely face.

"Yes," she said, "it is possible. And I owe it to him, more than to myself, to put the matter to the test."

"I will help you, Dora."

"You warmly wrong his hand. 'You are not to me a brother,' she exclaimed. 'I could repay your kindness as it deserves.'"

He looked at her eagerly and whispered:

"You might, Dora. One little word from your lips, and I should envy no man who walks with a shadow on his brow."

She put up her hand to stop him. "Let us talk of Victor," she said, coldly and with dignity, for it hurt her sorely that he should begin love-making at such a moment. "Tell me how I am to test this matter."

"I have conceived that the certificate was dated from Longdown. You must send some faithful messenger thither to make inquiries."

"I will go myself."

"You? My dear young lady—"

"Not a word! I should like to see you do it. I shall trust this business in the hands of a third person? No, no."

"If you go to Longdown I shall go with you."

"You may."

"When will you set out?"

"Within the hour."

"No," he reiterated, "it is too late to make the journey to-day. But I will be at your service in the morning."

She lifted her eyes to his face in gentle entreaty, but he remained firm, and, woman-like, she submitted, though it cost her a pang to do so.

She saw no more of either Victor or Dora, during the remainder of that day. But, early in the evening, the former sent up a note to her room, informing her that a train left the station for Longdown at six o'clock, and he would be at her service at that hour.

She returned word that she would be ready. Six o'clock of the next morning, therefore, found the young couple seated in the train, and on their way to Longdown on their most singular mission.

They reached their destination early in the day. But, as they stepped from the train, Victor's heart seemed to fail him of a sudden.

"Oh, I can't go on, I can't go on," he cried, with a piteous look at Dora. "I am weaker than I thought, or perhaps I love Victor better than I knew. This journey may result badly, and then it will always seem as if I had been guilty of treachery to my brother."

He looked so pale and distressed that Dora's heart melted with pity.

"You shouldn't have come with me," she said. "You shall not go a step further. I will see what I can do for you, and then you can remain quietly at the station here, until I have made the necessary inquiries."

He demurred at first, but ended by yielding to her entreaties.

"It seems so cowardly for me to remain behind, and leave you to face alone whatever discoveries you are destined to make."

"It is not cowardly," she insisted, gently. "I had no right to permit you to come at all. So now give me my instructions, and let me go at once."

After the lapse of some fifteen or twenty minutes, it drew up before a cottage-house, with a neatly kept lawn surrounding it. The driver dismounted, and rang the door.

This is Mr. Jones's residence, madam. Dora got out, and after having instructed him to wait for

A Modern Cinderella.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY CLARE VERNON.

"Oh, girls! there is going to be a new sensation at our fair," said Kate Foster, as she seated herself in a large rocking-chair in Mr. Nugent's parlor.

"What is it?" said Susie and Annabel Nugent, both in the same breath.

"Guess," said Kate.

"Oh, we can't! Do tell us, you provoking girl!" exclaimed Susie, impatiently.

"Oh, yes, Kate dear, won't you? Please tell without any more coaxing," said the gentle Annabel.

"Well," said Rosalie Kate, "if you will restrain your curiosity a moment, you shall be gratified. There is to be a beautiful pair of velvet slippers, which every numbered lady is to have the exquisite pleasure of trying on."

"Well, that's all? Hum! That's much ado about nothing, I think," said Susie's comment; while Annabel asked, "What number are they?"

"That is not to be disclosed until after the trial has been made. But I haven't told you the most exciting part. The lady who is able to wear them will win them; and, in addition to all this, she that hath ears to hear, let her hear, a diamond ring, valued at one hundred dollars, will be presented to her."

"Who makes this magnificent offer?" inquired Annabel.

A gentleman from New York, or Philadelphia, I can't remember which. What number do you wear, girls?"

"Why I wear two's, and Annabel two's and a half," said Susie.

Ethelmer Nugent now sauntered in. He was the brother of Annabel and Susie.

"Well, girls, are you all candidates for the ring and slippers?" he asked.

"Oh, you've heard about it, Ethelmer Nugent! Why didn't you tell us?" exclaimed Susie.

"Because I didn't consider you had a ghost of a chance," he replied, as he commenced turning a tune on the piano.

"Why, Ethelmer, Susie's foot is the smallest one in this neighborhood. One of the smallest, I mean. I wear the same number. Why did you think she would have no chance?" asked Kate Foster.

"Because Minnie Rose's foot is a size smaller," answered Ethelmer, commencing to play.

"Minnie Rose, the seamstress?" asked Annabel, while Susie sat the door between the sitting-room and the parlor with a slam, and said:

"Come, Ethelmer, stop playing that hideous tune, and tell us how you know."

"How I know?" said young Nugent, turning round on the piano-stool, and facing his sister.

"There's magic in a lady's foot, and who will the ladies know it, and she who has a pretty one."

Isn't that pretty good logic, to be contained in poetry? But to answer your question, I asked Miss Rose plain-blank, and she told me number one. She's in the sitting-room, sewing, now, don't you think, Miss Foster? and these girls never say a word to her. What do you say to an introduction?"

"Thank you, but I must be going," said Miss Foster, rising in a confused manner, "for I've come shopping to do before I return home."

"Wait, Kate, and Annabel and I will go with you," said Susie. Ethelmer Nugent turned his back to them and finished playing the tune he had begun, when Susie interrupted him, as before-mentioned, and then arose as if to leave the room.

"Going with us, Ethelmer?" asked Susie.

"No, I don't wish to detain Miss Foster since she is in so much haste, for I would have to furnish up a little, and her time is so precious," so saying he closed the door after him.

"The saucy fellow!" cried Kate.

"Don't mind him, Kate, he always is just so. Think we should have our seamstress on an equality with ourselves," said Annabel, as they went out on their shopping expedition, then arose as if to leave the room.

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woman in the full bloom of maturity. She is the literary character before-mentioned. She remains standing in a listless attitude, gazing out into the gloom. A hand is laid lightly, caressingly on her shoulder, and a gay voice whispers—

"Come, and be introduced to the handsomest gentleman here to-night."

"What are handsome men to me?" is the laughing reply. "A maiden of twenty does not expect adulation, when sweet sixteen, and charming eighteen, are dispensing smiles. I tell you, Annie I did away with sentiment years ago."

"Do you ever love?" she then asked, and seeing an expression of pain over-spread the countenance of the fair attendant, she added hastily: "Forgive my rudeness and thoughtlessness, won't you, Minnie, dear?"

"Yes, I will forgive, and at the same time answer your question. Yes, Annie, I loved, as some women love. My love was placed upon one unworthy. One who proved to be a summer friend. There will not, cannot be any illumination of dead ashes."

"What number are they?" she then said.

"Well, come, I am the hostess, and you the celebrity, so we must return," so saying Annie took her friend's arm and they entered the house.

The throng of "fair ladies and brave men" parted as by one consent, when she, who was to be the queen of the occasion, was presented to their expectant gaze.

"What a beautiful face!" "What splendid eyes!" "What a charming expression!" "What perfect hands, and what tiny feet!" were some of the thoughts expressed and unexpressed of the gentlemen.

While the ladies exclaimed and speculated vehemently—

"How superbly dressed!" "Is not that over-the-top lovely?" "Do you suppose that lace is real point?" "I wonder how old she is."

"How tasteful her toilet!"

After the bustling attendant upon her entrance had subsided, the music, dancing and flirtation went merrily on.

Minnie Rose, for she supposed you have recognized our friend, is waiting in the maze of the dance, with Mr. Margrave, the host, her friend Annie's husband, Annie, or Mrs. Margrave, after seeing Minnie well cared for, floated down the room, and rested before a sofa on which a gentleman was seated.

"Has she changed much since you last saw her?" is her first inquiry after placing herself by his side.

"Yes, oh yes! but for the better."

"You don't think she will recognize you?"

"Oh, no, for I then was a boy of twenty. I am now a man with a beard, and," replied the gentleman.

Annie then said, "How providential, that you and Helen were friends, and that Minnie and I were so intimate."

"Yes, Helen loved me still I can rejoice, but not otherwise," was the reply.

"Well, don't be disconsolate, Leon, for if this scheme fails there are scores of wealthy, beautiful and talented ladies from whom you can win a mistress for your heart and home."

"Don't speak so heartily, Mrs. Margrave. Would you have been thus easily consoled had Helen jilted you? Could you have serenely and calmly said, 'There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it,' to use an old but somewhat hackneyed maxim?"

"Oh, no!" said Annie, while her tender eyes became dewy with emotion. "Oh, no!" repeated she.

"Well, then, kind-hearted lady, give me credit for a little of that tenderness which you possess in such abundance. For I can assure you that a considerable amount of faithfulness, sentiment, and passion still lingers in my composition."

"You have not, Leon, I believe you," cried this little maiden. "Please pardon me if I have wounded your feelings or offended you."

"You have not, but do not exercise your mind about it. But, Annie, what is the first act in the drama?"

"Why the presentation of the famous artist to the celebrated authoress."

"Well, lead on!" I will follow your guidance so long as my reason tells me that you are not leading me astray."

"To just as if men ever reasoned!" is the sarcastic rejoinder.

"Not much, I am afraid, where the ladies are concerned. And the impulse of their own hearts, there would be few ill-sorted marriages," is the quick retort.

"Well, suppose we stop sparring, and proceed to accomplish what we have undertaken to perform," exclaims Mrs. Margrave.

"I am perfectly willing," replies the gentleman, offering her his arm.

"They make the circuit of the room and dispose of themselves, so as to command a view of the dancers. At this moment the music ceased, and the gentlemen led their partners from the floor. Mr. Margrave, with Minnie leaning on his arm, approaches the artist and Mrs. Margrave. The latter instantly says:

"Miss Rose, allow me to present Mr. Leon Bray, Mr. Bray, Miss Rose."

After the usual salutations Mr. Bray says: "I am most happy in being permitted to form the acquaintance of one whose name I read with delight by all, and whom fame declares to be most talented indeed."

"I can," said Minnie in reply to this compliment, "appreciate the honor of the acquaintance, but I have no desire to be transferred such lovely scenes to my canvas, and who has won the applause of all beauty-lovers."

"Ah, you flatterer," said Mr. Bray, depreciatingly.

"They gave me the precedent?" inquired Miss Rose laughingly. "I always make it a rule, whenever any one rates my merits higher than they deserve, to make him my creditor by doubling the affliction."

"Do you then, I shall be careful in choosing my words when conversing with you, Miss Rose, for I dislike that sort of thing as much as you possibly can." A few more words, and then Mrs. Margrave excused herself, and drew her husband away.

Then Mr. Bray and Miss Rose sauntered into the conservatory. Strains of music came softly floating from the room they had just left. And those two, he with his broad, high white brow, light, wavy brown hair, noble look and many forms; she with her splendidly marked figure, graceful movements and intellectual beauty, seemed fitting occupants of the small parlors.

Minnie and Leon both felt its magic influence, for they remained silent for a few moments. At length the artist broke the opportunity for conversation.

"Do not think me precipitate, Miss Rose, but I would declare my passion to you. I love you with all a man's strong, enduring fervor. Do not send me away without one word of comfort."

Minnie heard him in absolute amazement, then drawing her slight form to its utmost height, she laughingly said:

"This is a strange wooing, and you are a strange wooer. You have known me but an hour, and yet you declare yourself to be in the very depths of love?"

"Will you not pity me? Will you crush the hopes I have so long fondly cherished? Will you not?"

"Stop, sir," cried Minnie. "You must cease your protestations, for I will not listen to a word you say. I gave a promise to my lover, as he was then, that I would consider our engagement binding upon me until he had given me his freedom. I have neither seen nor heard from him for nine years; but I should be nine times nine years, I will never engage myself to another until he gives me permission."

Leon bowed gravely, and after a moment's hesitation, said:

"Permit me to relate a short story. Will you not signified her readiness, and they seated themselves among the fragrant flowers and tropical plants. Leon then related the following:

Two years ago, in the garden of a wealthy professional gentleman in one of our largest Eastern cities, there stood a youth of twenty, and a maiden of fifteen. They held a Bible in their hands, and like Robert Burns and Highland Mary, they took a vow of eternal constancy, and pledged themselves with a solemn oath never to engage themselves to any one unless the other gave his or her unbiased consent."

While the story was thus being told, Minnie was conscious of a feeling of deathly faintness creeping over her form. For this stranger's story was identical with her own. Leon, however, heeded not her emotion, but continued:

"A year passed away, a glad and happy year, but at its close a fearful ending. The only son of the gentleman, without so much as bidding her good-by, but he continued himself with the thought that he could write when he reached Liverpool. As soon as he landed, therefore, he wrote a long and loving letter, informing her of his departure, and how he was prevented from visiting her. They travelled through England, and just as they were preparing to visit France, a letter came from his affianced, informing him of her father's death, her poverty, and freeing him from his engagement. He immediately embarked for America. He found upon reaching Philadelphia that she had departed, none knew whither. In vain he sought among her numerous former friends and acquaintances, he could find no clue to her whereabouts. For two years he searched untiringly. At the conclusion of the third year he received a letter, which bore neither address nor signature, which informed him that she was living in a small village in the State of New York. It did not give the name of the place, however, nor state in which part of the State it was situated."

"He immediately started off, resolved to follow the clue until it should lead him to his beloved one. But he had not proceeded far before there was a fearful collision, and Leon, much bruised and bleeding, was killed, but he was injured so seriously that recovery seemed almost impossible. He was a month confined to his bed. In this predicament he could make no personal attempt toward the recovery of the lost one. He was so weak that he could do nothing but suffer and wait, one day, when a bright idea flashed into his brain. He remembered that he intended had feet of fairy-like proportions. And the thought occurred to him that he might find his "Cinderella" by means of the "glass slipper." He decided to offer a pair of elegant velvet slippers, of the size she wore, to any young lady in the small village round, who could wear them, together with a handsome diamond ring."

"He therefore sent an agent around to all the villages far and near, without success, until chancing to stop at a place called S—, and the young lady who had so long been searched for, won them."

"The agent, who knew nothing of the circumstances, supposing that he had a pair of slippers, and reported that he had at last found a foot small enough to wear the slippers; and handed the lady's address to his employer."

"And this young man was so overjoyed at finding his "Cinderella," that he immediately sent a letter to S—, requesting her to come to him. It was returned by the post-master—who wrote that the young lady to whom it was addressed, had, after disposing of the diamond ring, left the village, and gone some place whither all offer of marriage had been refused."

"The excitement and cruel disappointment, gave him a relapse. And when, months after, by order of his physicians, he set sail for Italy, it was with the firm conviction that he would never live to return to his village, and that he would be remained to perfect his artistic education. Then he travelled all over the known world. And when thinking of returning to America, he met a friend on his bridal tour, who informed him incidentally, that his early love had married, and entered his young wife. And also that she was an authoress of note."

"This made his heart leap, and hastened his footsteps. And now he awaits the return of his faithful wife, who he would love, and she is more precious and loved in his sight than ever. Will he, should he receive it?"

"Yes, oh yes! he should," cried Minnie.

"Oh, Leonard! how can I ever be thankful to him who has brought you back to me!"

"My darling, my darling! God has indeed been very good to me in permitting me to be reunited to you," murmured the artist as he clasped Minnie's unconscious form in a close embrace.

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"This made his heart leap, and hastened his footsteps. And now he awaits the return of his faithful wife, who he would love, and she is more precious and loved in his sight than ever. Will he, should he receive it?"

"Yes, oh yes! he should," cried Minnie.

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